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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000628

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/22/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW MINISTER OF SECURITY PROMISES ANTI-NARCOTICS  
COOPERATION

REF: A. CONAKRY 507  
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 184

CONAKRY 00000628 001.3 OF 002

Classified By: DCM Kent C. Brokenshire for reasons 1.4 B & D

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Guinea's newly-appointed Minister of Security promised full cooperation and 'total transparency' with the US in fighting narco-trafficking in Guinea. He stated that narco-corruption had spread throughout the presidency and government, but that he had a mandate from President Conte to aggressively stamp it out. The Minister promised to reign in illegal military and police roadblocks by working with the Minister of Defense to purge security forces of rogue elements. The Minister also provided fresh insights into the life of Ousmane Conte, the narco-trafficking son of Guinea's president. He claimed the previous Minister of Security had initially made a sincere effort to combat narco-trafficking, but had eventually fallen under its corrupting influence, a threat he will surely have to face himself. End Summary

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FIRST TARGET: ROGUE SECURITY FORCES  
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2.(C) Guinea's new Minister of Security, Elhadj Madifing Diane, paid an unexpected call on Charge Raspolic and DCM October 21. Consular business brought him to the Embassy, but while here Diane decided to make a courtesy call on the Charge, and took the occasion to emphasize that he wished strong cooperation with the Mission to combat narco-trafficking in Guinea. Over coffee in the Embassy cafeteria, Diane said he planned to improve security in Conakry by working with the Minister of Defense and the Minister of Territorial Administration to purge security forces of rogue elements who have lately been setting up illegal roadblocks late at night to extort money from the populace. He plans joint military/police patrols to track down and arrest uniformed security personnel who engage in such banditry. He also plans to encourage local communities to report the presence of rogue soldiers. As an incentive, the Minister said he will donate to the communities any money confiscated from these soldiers.

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A POLICY OF 'TOTAL TRANSPARENCY'  
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[1](#)3. (C) Turning to narcotics, Diane said he wanted a relationship of total transparency with the Embassy. He stated that his predecessor, former Minister of Security Mohamed Damba, had originally been aggressive in pursuing narco-traffickers and seizing cocaine, but had eventually begun to cooperate with them. "At the end he was walking with

the bad guys," he said. According to Diane, when Damba tried to interdict a shipment of cocaine reportedly hidden in a truck loaded with fish, he seized one of two trucks the traffickers had set up as decoys. The vehicle hauling the actual cocaine reportedly got through (Ref A).

14. (C) Diane did not propose any specific action on stemming the flow of cocaine through Guinea. However, he did state that narco-corruption had thoroughly penetrated President Conte's inner circle of advisers and friends to the point that he refused to accept any of them on his team at the Ministry of Security. "I will work alone, and if I do not succeed I will resign," he said.

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INFLUENCING OUSMANE  
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15. (C) Diane said President Conte fully backed a strong anti-narcotics approach. As such, he planned to personally press President Conte to force his son, Ousmane Conte, out of the drug trade. He also claimed to have met with Ousmane Conte's mother, who is not married to the President. He said he urged her to talk her son into finding a more legitimate line of work. He reportedly told her that Ousmane could keep the money he has thus far made, but to remain in the trafficking business would be 'very dangerous' for him.

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OUSMANE'S VENTURES IN CINEMATOGRAPHY  
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16. (C) Diane said Ousmane Conte was run out of his base at the seaport of Kamsar by the populace after he engaged the services of local women in making pornographic movies.

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According to Diane, the town got wind of Ousmane's cinematic enterprises after a Guinean living in Paris traveled to Kamsar to find a wife. After the marriage he returned with his bride to Paris. However, a Guinean friend soon visited the couple and brought with him a pornographic video. Later that evening, when the two men watched the video, the newlywed husband was shocked to find his wife featured as part of the evening's entertainment. He promptly returned with her to Kamsar, gave her back to her family, and showed the video to the family as justification. Within a few days, Imams were reportedly denouncing Ousmane's wickedness in mosques across Kamsar, and exhorting their congregations to chase him out of town. On an aside, the Minister said that the women who participated in Ousmane's film ventures were allegedly given new Chinese motorcycles as payment. Though Ousmane was reportedly driven out several months ago, women riding motorcycles in Kamsar are still viewed with suspicion. (Note: Ousmane may still periodically visit Kamsar. We have received at least one report placing Ousmane in Kamsar as late as August. End Note)

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COMMENT  
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17. (S) Diane is professional police officer with 40 years of experience. His appointment by President Conte signals that at least the Head of State is taking the narcotics issue seriously. This Embassy's dealings with him over the years suggest that he is essentially honest and cooperative. He took part in the USG-sponsored ILEA program in Gaborone earlier this year. In May, while attending a drug burning as controller general of the police (Ref B), he agreed to allow then Ambassador Carter to take a sample of the alleged drugs for testing, but was loudly countermanded by the director of the anti-drug police Thermite Mara and police director general Sekou Bangoura, both of whom have since been sacked. As we later discovered, the cocaine was actually laundry detergent. This incident seems to suggest that Diane has thus

far been able to stand aloof from the corruption around him. However, narco-traffickers and their patrons within the presidency are sure to offer Diane tantalizing bribes in order to maintain their lucrative trade. Diane says his honor cannot be bought at any price. His predecessor told us essentially the same thing, but in the end reportedly succumbed. Diane's real test is yet to come.

18. (S) Diane's bold intention to simultaneously put down narco-trafficking in Guinea, purge security forces of banditry, and empower citizens to denounce rogue soldiers will likely spark a major backlash against him from powerful quarters. The latter plan in particular is fraught with possibilities for abuse. In his acceptance speech on assuming charge of the Ministry of Security, Diane made no mention of these initiatives to gathered government officials. Their implementation may catch many by surprise. The Spanish Ambassador, who has also had favorable dealing with Diane, told DCM October 21 that he was concerned that Diane might be fired from his job in short order or even assassinated if he does not take a more measured approach to his objectives. This is a concern we share, and will address with him at the appropriate time.  
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